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WHY WE SHOULD TEACH DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Democracy has become a cherished ideal in Africa. Many countries in Africa claim to be democratic with a number of them incorporating, the word 'democratic' in their names. Liberation struggles were waged in the name of democracy, yet in terms of governance democracy appears to be the one thing that seems to elude Africa. Various happenings like genocide, ethnic cleansing, coups d'etats and other political disturbances are ample evidence of this failure to establish democratic governance in African states. It is in this context that it is argued in this paper that if Africa is to realise the dream of attaining democracy, which its people have opted for, educational institutions must play their part by teaching the concept of democracy. However, the teaching of democracy in schools requires that the whole community be involved through the establishment of democratic culture in public institution if it is to succeed. What the school teaches can only take root if it finds support within society. In other words, there is need for a holistic approach to democracy that results in democracy permeating every aspect of life. Thus, the paper also discusses some of the ways in which democracy can be taught. The focus of the paper is Africa, not because Africa is the only continent in the world that is struggling to realise the ideal of democracy, but simply because of the situatedness of the writer in Africa. Being rooted in Africa, one is compelled to reflect on how life in Africa can be improved given the diversity of the citizens of many African countries.

(Key words: Democracy, education, teaching, participation, consensus, Africa).

Introduction

Africa has been described as constituted of emerging democracies. Arguments have been proffered that the idea of democracy is not new to Africa, that African communities have known democracy in the form of consensus for a long time. After the attainment of independence, many

African countries have re-awakened to the need to pursue democracy informed by traditional African practices, yet the idea has so far appeared like a mirage, receding as African communities progress. It has also been argued that democracy is "necessary for the enjoyment of human rights and for development" (Kamba, 1998:5). A number of African countries have experimented with other forms of government without much success in establishing justice, peace and development for their people. The one-man rule in Uganda under Idi Amin and the dictatorship of Bokasa in the Congo should be enough to convince skeptics that dictatorships do not benefit the people and cannot lead to development. Zimbabwe has been said to have deteriorated into rule by an elite after starting off as a very promising democracy.[1]

Developments in Zimbabwe have demonstrated that oligarchies[2] are not the best forms of government for African countries. Very few African countries can legitimately claim to be democratic or to govern by consensus. It is in this context that we seek to examine why it is essential that democracy should be part of the school curriculum in Africa. It is suggested that the principles of democracy that schools should teach must be a product of a synthesis of values derived from African as well as conceptions of democracy.

The article proceeds by, first, discussing aspects of Western notions of democracy,[3] and exploring African conceptions of democracy. This done, the paper discusses some reasons that can be proffered for the view that democracy is essential in Africa if the people of Africa are to enjoy peace and stability. Having argued that democracy is essential to the welfare of the people of Africa, the paper goes on to suggest how democracy can be entrenched in Africa through education.

Occidental Democracy

The term democracy is derived from a combination of two Greek words, that is, *demos* meaning people and *cratos* meaning rule or power (Babarinde, 1994:226). One can surmise that it was this that led Abraham Lincoln to define democracy as "rule of the people, by the people, for the people"

1 This chaos has been attributed to what Masunungure (2000) calls "the capture of the state by the ruling party," while Kaulemu (200) describes this phenomenon as the confusion of failing to separate the ruling party from the state.

2 An oligarchy is, here, taken to mean rule by the few. These could be members of a political party that has concentrated power in its circles.

3 The communist notions of democracy are not discussed here as they are taken to be part of the Western tradition. While, in terms of governance, they are radically different from the capitalist notion, their implication for Africa as a marginalised continent were basically the same. Consider Marx's and Engels' argument for the colonisation of the periphery as a necessary condition for the advance towards communism.

(http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pub/whatsdem/whatdem2.htm).[1] Plato placed democracy below timocracy and oligarchy because it was rule by all including those least qualified to participate in political decision making, the uninformed and lowly classes. He believed that all desires were given satisfaction since in a democracy decisions were determined by vote rather than by reason (Strol, 1964:22). Aristotle, while recognising that the exclusion of some people from political participation could result in making them enemies of the state (Tarrant, 1989:14), opposed democracy since it was rule by the many or poor which focused on the interests of the needy instead of "the good of the whole" (Strol, 1964:43). The opposition to democracy by the two prominent Greek philosophers was a result of their observation of how it functioned in Athens during their time. In Athens, democracy was rule by the citizens who were then adult males. This was direct democracy constituted of assemblies in which all the citizens in a city met to debate important issues of public policy that included war and peace as well as foreign relations, and the passing of legislation as well as the election of officials. While it has been argued that in the Athenian system, the right to participate in political decision making was conferred on all citizens, it must be pointed out that these excluded women, slaves and plebs. This direct democracy was characterised by a continuous participation of the citizens in the direct exercise of power. Ake maintains that the Assembly, constituting 6000 people met over 40 times per year to debate important issues on governance (Ake, 2000: 8). This was possible in Ancient Athens because of the relatively small population of those who were considered as citizens. Today, this is no longer possible because of larger populations. In explaining why direct democracy is not possible in this era, El-Wahid Ali argues, "large populations restrict direct democracy because of the amount of time it would take to debate a range of complex issues" (Abd El-Wahid Ali, Muhamed. http://www.aun.edu.eg/fac_wadi/2005/MG2E.htm). So, in many countries that claim to be democratic, democracy assumes one of the various representative forms of government.

One distinguishing feature of representative democracy is the election of representatives who participate in government on behalf of the people who elect them. These individuals may belong to different political parties but they all constitute the link between the government and the people who elect them. The government is intended to serve the interest of the people not the people serving the interests of the government. Taking a legal

1 This definition appears simple but it is a complex one. Once we focus on what is meant by 'people' and 'rule,' it becomes apparent that there may not be agreement on what these terms mean. For example, 'people' may mean those designated as citizens, or those who have the appropriate property qualifications or were male. For the purpose of this discussion, the people are taken to be those who have reached the age of majority in a country.

perspective, Kamba (1998: 5), argues that the essence of democracy lies in "the rule of law, the separation of powers,"[1] and "the independence of the judiciary." Furthermore, he contents that democracy is characterised by "multiparty, periodic and free and fair elections" (Kamba, 1998: 5) that identify the representatives of the people. These representatives are re-elected or replaced periodically, a measure that is supposed to ensure that democracy remains alive and government accountable to the electorate. In a truly representative democracy these elections are free, fair and competitive. The people have the capacity to change the government peacefully through elections when it no longer serves their interests. This, in a way, ensures that the representatives remain aware of the will of those who elected them and the need to constantly consult them. That periodic replacement or re-election of representatives becomes an essential safeguard against complacency and self aggrandisement without regard for the electorate. It is Singleton who argues:

To maintain stability, political institutions, such as parliament and political parties, developed to solve recurring political problems. Successful institutions adapt to changing circumstances and help prevent any individual from gaining control of government. For example, political parties act as a means of representing different community interests in parliament. Parties act as a bridge between the citizens and their elected government, and no other institution can do their job (Singleton http://www.abc.net.au/civics/democracy/td_primary.htm).

The above means that, in a democracy, power resides with the people, the governed, those who elect representatives. The people should not fear violence from the government if they express their dissatisfaction with it. They should freely choose to support political parties whose ideas appeal to them. The advantage of democracy, as is pointed by Herodotus, is that it has the potential to increase the governed people's enthusiasm for their country (Kraut, 1992.58).

Singleton further talks of constitutional democracy, a form of representative democracy, as a system in which the constitution defines who will represent the people, "legitimates [sic], limits and empowers the government" and protects "equally the autonomy and rights of everyone in the polity" (Singleton). Constitutional democracy is characterised by the rule of law "to prevent the arbitrary, abusive use of power, to protect human rights, to support democratic procedures in elections and public policy making, and

1 By the rule of law is meant respect for the constitution of the country under consideration. It is not laws imposed by outsiders, but the laws that the country would have set for itself.

to achieve a community's shared purposes" (Singleton).. In the process, it ensures the protection of the rights of minorities so that they are not at the mercy of the majority. More importantly, in a constitutional democracy, "A constitutional document provides fixed limitations on the exercise of power by assigning certain specific powers to different structures of government" (Singleton). Generally it is characterised by separation of powers between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. These three arms of government work separately to provide checks and balances on each other. Thus, it puts in place checks and balances that protect citizens from the abuse of power by those involved in government.

In addition to referring to a form of government, the term democracy is also often used to refer to "a particular type of society" as well as a social arrangement in which the rights and obligations of individuals are significantly understood and respected. A democratic society is one in which the majority of the population plays an active rather than a passive role. In a democracy the old traditions of deference and subordination have been replaced by a sense of equity among the people: the knowledge that every person has an equal right to be respected and listened to. The term *democracy* is frequently associated with a moral imperative and equated with political liberalism, thus making it synonymous with substantive civic rights, such as freedom from arbitrary arrest, freedom of religion, speech and association (Ssingleton).

Johnson lists, among the characteristics of democracy, free speech and press, citizens' participation in government as well as civic groups, and freedom of assembly (Johnson, N: 2000. http://www.uiowa.edu/~cyberlaw/SchBoard/Other/ic000829.html). Other characteristics include competition for political office, freedom to organise politically, religiously and socially.

On its website, the US State Department lists what it considers the pillars of democracy as follows:

- Sovereignty of the people;
- Government based upon consent of the governed;
- Majority rule;
- Minority rights;
- Guarantee of basic human rights;
- Free and fair elections;
- Equality before the law;
- Due process of law;
- Constitutional limits on government;

- Social, economic, and political pluralism;
- Values of tolerance, pragmatism, cooperation, and compromise (US Department of States).

So from the discussion above, it is clear that democracy can mean, "a system of political rule," or "a general principle of social organization" or a society in which institutions are "organized on elective or participatory lines" (Chaplin, 1996:113). Still, it can be viewed as "a certain social ethos, in which values like freedom, equality or tolerance prevail" (Singleton).

The above Western concept of democracy has been described by Wiredu (1997) as "adversarial democracy." It is adversarial because it is characterised by competition for power between two or more political parties. It is also adversarial in that in most cases, except perhaps in cases where there is proportional representation, the winner takes all and the loser really loses out. There is also the possibility that those in the minority can remain in the minority for ever. Thus, the loser is left bitter, unreconciled and without good will. Reaching out to the loser is not built into adversarial democracy. For this reason, it may not be the best type of democracy for Africa.

Traditional African democracy

Gyekye argues that in Africa before the arrival of Europeans, principles of democracy were formulated in "proverbs as well as in artistic and institutional expressions" (Gyekye, 1988). Along this line of reasoning, he cites the African proverb, "one head does not get into counsel" which emphasised the need for consultation, deliberation and conferring with others on political issues (Gyekye). It warns rulers against making decisions that affect the community without consulting them. This thinking was further reinforced by another proverb, "wisdom is not in the head of one person," meaning that since wisdom cannot be found in one person's head, one has to work in consultation with others in matters requiring the exercise of wisdom (Gyekye, 29). The Shona of Zimbabwe have a saying, "*chara chimwe hachitswanyi inda*" which literally translates to, one finger does not crush a louse. There is always need to consult and work with others and find out what they think. Two Shona sayings, "*Zano ndoga akapisa jira*" (I know it all burnt his blanket) and "*Rume rimwe harikombi churu*" (One man cannot surround an anthill) emphasise the idea that no individual knows everything or can do everything alone. There is need for consultation, openness and receptivity to the views expressed by others so that appropriate decisions are made.

Teffo noted, as argued above, that in the Greek city-states, slaves, and women were excluded from social functions. Yet this did not mitigate Athenian democracy. In African communities, there were differences in the level of involvement of women in political decision making. In matrilineal societies it would appear that there was some measure of involvement of women in decision making than there was in patrilineal societies. In most patrilineal societies, women were marginalised. So talk of democracy in traditional Africa did not always include women. While we can still talk of democracy in traditional African communities in the form of consensus the exclusion of women must be at the back of our minds (Teffo, 1994).

Furthermore, Teffo argues:
most importantly, consensus-seeking is the hallmark of traditional political decision-making in many African communities. Any system that gives such priority to consensus is quite clearly democratic in a far deeper sense than any system in which decision-making proceeds on the principle that the majority carries the day (Teffo, 446).

Wiredu expresses the same thinking when he quotes Kaunda as having argued, "In our original societies we operated by consensus. An issue was talked out in solemn conclave until such time as agreement could be achieved" (Wiredu, 1997:303). He also quotes Nyerere when he said, "in African society the traditional method of conducting affairs is by free discussion" (Wiredu, 1997.303).

Teffo further argues that, kingship in African communities was part and parcel of the "communalistic social order." The institution of kingship inspired solidarity, continuity, unity of the culture and values of the community. He argues that in fact, the system in traditional African communities is better described as *communocracy* in as far as it involved the community in activities of governance. He then argues that *communocracy* is a form of democracy practised among African communities (Teffo, p. 446).

According to Teffo, an objective analysis of kingship in African communities will show that democracy was part and parcel of the system. He invokes the African proverb, *Kgosi ke kgosika batho or Kunzi mambo vanhu* (A chief is a chief through the people). The king ascended to the throne and ruled with the consent of the people. Once the people disapproved, one could not continue to be king. The relationship was akin to Rousseau's social contract. There was always the possibility of being deposed by the people. More importantly, the king did not govern alone. He had a council of elders

that deliberated on issues of national interest. The decisions that were made were not attributed to the king but to the Council. This was the basis of the respect the people had for kingship (Teffo, 446).

Teffo argues that the councillors were representative in the sense that they were lineage heads. They were chosen by their lineages on the basis of seniority, wisdom, popularity, and vitality. They were constantly in touch with their communities. The council operated on the basis of consensus. They debated issues until consensus was established. "This is what makes the system cooperative rather than adversarial. It also certainly strengthens its democratic standing" (Teffo, 447).

From the views expressed above, African philosophers, like Teffo, Gyekye, and Wiredu have argued for consensus in decision making in African democracies since in African communities consensus has always been "an immanent approach to social interaction" (Wiredu, 1997: 303). They have argued that the concept and practice of democracy are not new to Africa. What is different is the form and practice through which it has been understood in other communities. Wiredu argues that African consensual democracy was characterised by dialogue, cooperation, compromise and allowing those in the minority to be heard so that they did not feel marginalised. Because of this, consensual democracy has no "permanent outsiders to state power" (Wiredu, 1997: 311). However, Wiredu concedes that it cannot be claimed that consensus was always attained. That is why there were conflicts and wars. It also has to be acknowledged that not everyone was represented in traditional politics. It was those belonging to the ruling families who participated and were consulted in decision making.

For our purpose, we take cognizance of Africa's triple heritage. We cannot deny that as Africans we have been profoundly influenced by Occidental as well as Asian cultures. We cannot ignore efforts by a number of African philosophers to "return to the source" (Eze, 1997: 314) in terms of understanding African traditional notions of democracy. We also need to consider Eze's argument that "many 'modern' African dictators have manipulated the traditional ideals of consensus politics to centralise power in their arbitrary hands" Eze, 1997: 314). It would be futile to ignore Africa's triple heritage in trying to find solutions to problems of governance that confront us as Africans. The eclectic or syncretic approach appears the most appropriate as it involves appropriating principles of democracy from its triple heritage. Some such principles are indicated in the last section of this paper.

What is important for our purpose in the present discussion is the general agreement among African philosophers on the need to promote democracy in Africa. What we also want to add is that in Africa, there is need for provisions to empower the people to recall their representative and appoint new ones if the representatives are failing to represent the people's aspirations. The representatives need to know that they should be constantly in contact with their constituencies and constantly consult with them on all important issues. The tendency has been for representatives to visit constituencies in which they want to be voted for during elections. Once elected they disappear and set about enriching themselves without ever revisiting their constituencies and informing them of crucial developments in government. This is because they know the constituencies have no powers to recall them. In this case the constituencies are short changed and democracy is crippled.

Why democracy is essential to Africa

During the era of colonialism, Africans were excluded from democratic practices and processes. The argument was that they were backward and needed to develop for them to be able to appreciate the rudiments of democratic procedures. Many African countries had to engage in liberation struggles to enable them to attain independence and they claimed that they wanted to establish democratic rule. Indeed, after independence many African countries came up with impressive democratic constitutions (Gitari, 1996:86). People were quite hopeful and looked forward to participating in democratic governance of their countries. However, for a number of African countries, the attainment of democratic governance has largely remained a mirage for various reasons (see Scholz, 2004; Masunungure, in Harold-Barry, 2004; Eze, E. C., 1997, and Gitari, D. M. in Bennie van der Walt and Rita Swanepoel, 85 – 100).

Why democracy should be taught

In justifying why democracy should be part of the school curricula, we agree with Singleton that if there is to be democracy in government, "then there must be education of the people in the principles, practices and commitments of democracy" (Singleton). In other words we cannot just expect people to know about the theory and practice of democracy without them having been taught. Democracy cannot be a product of instinct. We cannot expect the people to be familiar with the specific functions of the arms of government without having been taught about these. Thus, Matthew Gandal and Chester E. Finn, Jr. maintain that knowledge of how democracy functions must be taught and learned. People must be taught to

cherish democracy both "as a concept and a way of life" (Gandal, M. and Finn, http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/archive/freedom/freedom2.htm).Teaching democracy prepares the learners for informed active participation in civic life. In fact, Johnson (2000) argues that schools are there to "prepare students for democracy," a position that was long been advanced by Dewey (1970). This emphasises that schools are there to produce "students capable of making informed decisions in a democratic society" (Johnson, 200). Parker expressed the same reasoning in his synopsis of *Teaching Democracy: Unity and Diversity in Public Life.* Such schools provide education for democracy (Parker, W. C. 2002 http://www.newhorizons.org/trans/trans_review_parker.htm).

In teaching democracy, schools would not teach one particular form of democracy. Rather, they would engage in discussion of the various forms of democracy and expose students to values enshrined in democratic practices such as tolerance, objectivity, fairness, equality, participation, pragmatism, cooperation, compromise, a sense of belonging to the community, and the question of identity. Topics that can be part of the school curricula include, the meaning of sovereignty of the people, the will of the governed, the meaning of majority rule, consensus, human rights, the meaning of life, freedom, as well as equality before the law. The students would also study different types of constitutions, especially the constitutions of their own countries. Another important consideration is that, if elections and representation are central to democracy, people must be familiar with how the system of government works. They should be aware of how they can actively influence change and that they can actually influence and initiate change. As Sifuna argues:

For democracy to flourish there must be a politically literate and active citizenry who are able to take a direct, personal responsibility in the working of society including government. These are men and women who have a working knowledge of the aim and purpose of government, how it is constituted, maintained and renewed, how government policy is formulated and implemented; the nature and scope of government institutions, government processes and procedures and how they operate. Political literacy goes hand in hand with political action. Therefore democracy is sustained by people who care to find out, investigate and explore problems and issues in society (Sifuna, 2001: 3).

Sifuna proceeds to argue, and we are inclined to agree with him, that democratic behaviour has to be acquired through learning. It is essential that principles and ideals of democracy be part of the school curriculum. This is essential especially in Africa where voter apathy is very high.

Another important reason for the inclusion of the concept of democracy in education is the nature of communities that are found in Africa. There is no country in Africa that is not constituted of diverse cultures, religions, skin colour, gender, socio-economic statuses and races. The teaching of democracy would lead to internalisation of inclusivity, thereby producing societies that enable all members to feel that they are equal citizens who belong to the same community. In other words, effective education for democracy should attempt to eliminate sexism, racism, tribalism, elitism, and classism as it encourages respect for human dignity. It should lead to a celebration of diversity and tolerance for alternative views. It is in this context that Singleton has argued that:

Students should be taught to question the reliability and validity of decisions and to offer constructive criticism and alternatives, not simply argue for arguments' sake. Likewise, children need to understand that there are differing viewpoints, solutions, or perspectives in addition to their own. The skill of listening to others and accepting and respecting their points of view are valuable lessons taught in a classroom that values democracy. In the end, the processes and discussions are just as important as the result, as people have the opportunity to discuss and debate issues. A decision or viewpoint has not been made without explanation or clarification of concepts. It is not the aim of a democracy to convert people to one view but rather to seek common ground, to seek better understanding, to seek to discover how we can improve our society all altogether (Singleton).

It is essential to have an intelligent citizenry that questions the activities, and choices of its representatives. This is essential as many governments and political leaders in Africa prefer an uncritical, apathetic, and passive populace, with easy manipulability. Teaching democracy enables students to learn to dissent without fighting, to debate in an informed manner, to act democratically and responsibly. It can be argued that one of the primary lessons of a democracy is that we can agree to disagree. From school, the learners would leave with knowledge and understanding as well as skills in democratic procedures. The inclusion of democracy in education is essential if we accept that school education is a conscious social reproduction process. It can be argued that education plays a critical role in democracy by "teaching non-repression and non-discrimination and imparting the values and confidence necessary for civic participation" (Singleton).

In explaining why democracy should be taught, El-Wahid Ali (2005) maintains that many teachers are often unintentional obstacles to the promotion of democracy. They disregard students' interests, skills and needs resulting

in the feeling of alienation in students. Hence, El- Wahid Ali argues: "Our students must be taught to value democracy as a concept and a way of life. Teaching democracy also means preparing our children to be citizens who will take part in actively preserving democracy" (El- Wahid Ali, 2005). Parker also argues that the inclusion of democracy in the school curricula is essential if we are to get rid of the notion that democracy consists of citizens electing representatives occasionally and then returning to private life. Arguing the case for including democracy in education, Parker presents five points, as follows:

First, democratic education is not a neutral project, but one that tries to predispose citizens to principled reasoning and just ways of being with one another. Second, educators need simultaneously to engage in multicultural education and citizenship education. These are not two things but two aspects of the same thing. Third, the diversity that schools contain makes extraordinarily fertile soil for democratic education. Schooling is the first sustained public experience for children, and it affords a rich opportunity to nurture public virtue-toleration and respect, for example, and the disposition and skills to dialogue across difference. Fourth, this dialogue-or what I call "deliberation"...plays an essential and vital role in democratic education, moral development, and public policy. In a diverse society, deliberation is the avenue of choice to enlightened public policy.

Fifth, the access/inclusion problem that we face today is one of extending democratic education to students who typically are not afforded it. This includes most students, I believe. Some are members of historically oppressed groups, and some are members of the mainstream culture and affluent groups whose democratic education is superficial and trivial. Not only should tools of power be shared with those who now don't have them; those who do have them must be educated to use them fairly and compassionately, "with liberty and justice for all." Democratic educatipn is for everyone and this certainly includes those who (for now) have the most power, for they are in a position to do the most harm when they lack virtue. Just as multicultural education is not only for "others," neither is democratic citizenship education (Parker).

It is also important to note that there are countries that describe themselves as democracies and have constitutions that appear to promote democracy. They claim their people have "rights and freedoms that are, in reality, nonexistent" (Matthew and Chester). Gandal and Finn point to the danger, in countries emerging from dictatorship to consider democracy simplistically, as a guarantee of individual freedom, even license, rather than as a complex

interplay of ideas, institutions, obligations, rights, and actions' (*ibid*). It is, therefore, essential that democracy be taught in order to ensure a genuine understanding of democracy and what it entails.

How democracy can be taught

Of course if democracy is to take root in any society, educational institutions have a role to play in its dissemination. The real question is how they could do this effectively. It is not enough to include democracy in the school curricula. There is need for appropriate strategies that entrench democratic values and practices in society, which are strategies that enable the pupils to participate in decision-making inside their classrooms as well as in real life. If this is to happen, the starting point should be the removal of authoritarian methods of teaching and administration from educational institutions (Chira: 1990).

Singleton argues that teaching democracy involves a two-pronged approach. Arguing that children must be initiated into the basic concepts of democracy and the knowledge base and theories underpinning democracy and the democratic state, he maintains that this has to be done through teachers modelling for the pupils. Pupils should be able to see in their teachers models of democracy. Secondly, he argues that teachers and pupils must have the freedom to experiment and practise democracy. It is only through practice that pupils will be able to internalise the values of democratic practice. "There is no right way to teach democracy unless we practice it...a school's ethos, its structures and its role models also clearly articulate to students about what is important and valued," argues Singleton. In other words, the students have to experience democracy at school through participation in group discussions and debates. In the process the school must provide the model of how democracy works. The aim of debate and discussion is not to convert people to one view but rather to arrive at a common ground that leads to a better understanding of how we can live together and improve our communities for the benefit of all. Among other values, democratic schools will promote tolerance, respect for one another and the opinions of other people, openness to new and diverse ideas, willingness to learn from one another, a recognition of equality of all people, the need for cooperation and respect of the rights of all people.

In arguing for the promotion of democracy, schools should involve pupils in the running of the school, meaning that they should participate in the crafting of fair and reasonable school rules. In addition, the pupils must take

part in ensuring that these rules are enforced and adhered to by the school community. The rights of the pupils must be respected within the schools. Their opinions should not be ignored, as pupils are encouraged to think for themselves. They should feel that they are appreciated as human beings and know that they are responsible for shaping their destiny. The school should be characterised by politeness to one another. This would mean eradicating "gross child abuse in schools" as reported in *The Financial Gazette* (October 15-21, 2009:11).

Another way of entrenching democracy in schools is to allow students to establish student bodies that ensure their welfare. These can be student representative councils, peer mediation committees, peer support groups, or committees for organising events. The pupils can also be allowed to elect prefects, monitors, and house captains with guidance from the teachers (Babarinde, 1994: 237. Note that Babarinde would like pupils to have no guidance or influence from teachers, but this researcher believes that such guidance should be sought). Students would be encouraged to think seriously about their choices and why they are choosing these individuals. This involvement enables pupils to study human character, to learn and experience democratic processes early, and it prepares them for future participation in democratic processes.

Finally, promoting democracy in schools can be done by consolidating the participation of parents, teachers and students in the running of the school. The advantage with this approach is that students are able to internalise democratic practices and values through participation from a very early age. It becomes a way of life for them and they grow up with those positive values.

Conclusion

It appears, therefore, that schools in Africa should teach democracy if Africa is to know lasting peace, development and justice. Principles of fairness, equality, tolerance, respect for human life and human rights, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and the right to a fair trial as inalienable rights of all citizens can only flourish in societies characterised by democratic institutions, values and practices. Democracy education familiarises people with the precepts and practices of democracy, with a view to producing citizens who are principled, independent, inquisitive, and analytic in their outlook with commitment to democracy. What this implies is a radical transformation in Africa's educational systems so that they play

a pivotal role in the planting, nourishment and protection of democracy. We should always be mindful that democracy can fail and this needs to be guarded against in Africa. It is in this context that democracy education needs to permeate every aspect of school and community life.

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